

TRIUMPH OF THE ECONOMIC VIRTUES
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embellished the picture, The redistribution
of property
at the time of the Dissolution, and the
expansion of
trade in the middle of the century, had
led, one of
them argued, to a great increase in the
volume of credit
transactions* The opprobrium which
attached to loans
at interest—" a sly and forbid practice"—
not only
among Romanists and Anglicans, but
among honest
Puritans, played into the hands of the less
scrupulous
members of " the faction." Disappointed
in politics,
they took to money-lending, and, without
venturing
to justify usury in theory, defended it
in practice*
¹¹ Without the scandal of a recantation, they
contrived
an expedient, by maintaining that, though
usury for
the name were stark naught, yet for
widows, orphans
and other impotents (therein principally
comprising
the saints under persecution) it was very
tolerable,
because profitable, and in a
manner necessary."
Naturally, Calvin's doctrine as to the
legitimacy of
moderate interest was hailed by these
hypocrites with
a shout of glee. " It took with the
brethren like
polygamy with the Turks, recommended by
the example
of divers zealous ministers, who
themselves desired
to pass for orphans of the first rank/"
Nor was
it only as the apologist of moderate
interest that
Puritanism was alleged to reveal the

doven Jhoof.
Puritans themselves complained of a
mercilessness in
driving hard bargains, and of a harshness
to the poor,
which contrasted unfavourably ^with the
practice of
followers of the unreformed religion. "
The Papists/'
wrote a Puritan in 1653, " may rise up
against many
of this generation. It is a sad thing that
they should
be more forward upon a bad principle than a
Christian
upon a good one." "

Such, in all ages, is history as seen by the
political
pamphleteer* The real story was less
dramatic, but
more significant. From the very beginning,
Calvinism
had comprised two elements, which Calvin
himself had
fused, but which contained the seeds of
future discord.